



## A CUP OF HEALTH WITH CDC

### *What about Chronic Kidney Disease?*

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[Announcer] This podcast is presented by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. CDC – safer, healthier people.

[Matthew Reynolds] Welcome to *A Cup of Health with CDC*, a weekly broadcast of the MMWR, the Morbidity and Mortality Weekly Report. I'm your host, Matthew Reynolds.

Did you know that there are millions of Americans who have an illness that is damaging their kidneys and they may not even realize it? In its early stages, chronic kidney disease may have few symptoms, so a person may not realize there is anything wrong. Your kidneys are your body's way of removing toxins or wastes that build up in your blood. Certain health conditions can play a role in gradual damage to your kidneys. This can lead to kidney failure. If that happens, your kidneys no longer do a good enough job of removing toxins from your body.

Chronic kidney disease is a growing problem in the United States, and here to discuss this with us is Dr. Rashida Dorsey from CDC's National Center for Health Statistics. Dr. Dorsey is an author of a recent report on chronic kidney disease in the United States. Welcome to the show, Dr. Dorsey.

[Dr. Dorsey] Thank you, Matthew. It's a pleasure being here

[Matthew Reynolds] Dr. Dorsey, can you explain how our kidneys work and how chronic kidney disease affects us?

[Dr. Dorsey] Sure. Healthy kidneys function by removing toxic substances and poisons from the body. It normally occurs as an around-the-clock process, but there are risk factors that can lead to a loss of kidney function. They include chronic diseases like diabetes, hypertension, infectious diseases, or even a family history of chronic kidney disease.

There are five stages of chronic kidney disease, or CKD as it's commonly referred. Stages 1 and 2 are the early, mild forms of the disease. Then, with stages 3 and 4, there's an increasing seriousness, and also a likelihood of symptoms. Finally, there's stage 5, the most severe form of the disease, also known as end-stage renal disease, and this is the phase that requires dialysis or a kidney transplant.

[Matthew Reynolds] It sounds like what you're describing might be a rather slow process. Are there symptoms that a person with chronic kidney disease would notice in the early stages?

[Dr. Dorsey] Well you know, research in this area is still continuing. There may be a slow, progressive process that's causing this disease. It may be a part of an acute injury, or it could be a combination of both. The early stages are subtle, and most people will not notice signs or symptoms, so raising awareness is important for people who are at high risk of developing CKD. Like I said, this includes people with diabetes, hypertension, and a family history of chronic kidney disease.

[Matthew Reynolds] You have just completed a study of chronic kidney disease. How did you go about studying this problem and what did you learn?

[Dr. Dorsey] We used data from national health surveys conducted by the CDC that surveyed more than 12,000 adults in the United States, and basically we just found that chronic kidney disease is fairly common. About 17% of people in the United States have it. It's an increase from the last time we had estimates about chronic kidney disease in the population. We also found that CKD is more common in people who have diabetes, high blood pressure, heart disease, people who are obese, and is also more likely in African-Americans or Mexican-Americans, older individuals age 60 years and above, and likelier in people who have less than a high school education.

[Matthew Reynolds] Dr. Dorsey, why are we seeing this increase and is there something new going on here, or are we just getting better at detecting kidney disease?

[Dr. Dorsey] It's uncertain, but probably a combination of both factors. Diabetes and hypertension prevalence – the two main risk factors – has increased significantly. Likewise, the life span of those living with those conditions has also increased, and there's also raised awareness of CKD.

[Matthew Reynolds] With all of this talk about increasing numbers, I wonder who should be worried about kidney disease. Are there particular groups of people that are at more risk and are there tests available?

[Dr. Dorsey] Well, the National Kidney Foundation recommends that people with diabetes, high blood pressure, cardiovascular disease, or a family history of chronic kidney disease get tested. Your doctor can test for CKD with a blood test or a urine test, and if CKD is found, your doctor will discuss the disease and treatment options.

[Matthew Reynolds] Some of this seems complicated. Where can our listeners get more information about chronic kidney disease?

[Dr. Dorsey] You can get information from your doctor or online resources. One of them is the National Kidney Disease Education Program at [nkdep.nih.gov](http://nkdep.nih.gov). There's World Kidney Day in March. This is an international event to raise kidney disease awareness and promote early detection. And of course, the local public library.

[Matthew Reynolds] Thank you, Dr. Dorsey, for taking the time to talk to us today.

[Dr. Dorsey] Thank you. Thanks for inviting me.

[Matthew Reynolds] That's it for this week's show. Don't forget to join us next week. Until then, be well. This is Matthew Reynolds for *A Cup of Health with CDC*.

[Announcer] To access the most accurate and relevant health information that affects you, your family and your community, please visit [www.cdc.gov](http://www.cdc.gov).